

## OD Policy and Procedures Checklist

### Quality Step Increase (QSI)

Quality Step Increase (QSI) Policies	
<i>Description</i>	<p>An additional step increase granted outside of the normal within-grade waiting periods to recognize superior performance by the employee over the entire performance period as measured by the employee's most recent rating of record.</p> <p>QSIs are considered the highest form of award since it results in a permanent increase to the employee's base pay.</p>
<i>Criteria/Examples</i>	<p>As outlined in the CFR, QSIs may be granted to employees who have demonstrated sustained performance of high quality significantly above that expected at the Acceptable level as measured by the elements and standards in the performance plan.</p>
<i>Eligibility</i>	<p>May be granted to individual employees only.</p> <p>Must meet <u>all</u> of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. General Schedule employee (GS/GM) who has not reached Step 10 of their grade. (Federal Wage System employees are not eligible for QSIs.)</li> <li>2. Must be a permanent employee or on a temporary appointment of more than one year.</li> <li>3. Must not have received a QSI during the preceding 52 weeks.</li> <li>4. Most recent rating of record must be the highest level permitted by the appraisal system under which the employee was covered. For example, a rating of Acceptable is the highest possible rating for employees at NIH. If the employee's most recent rating of record was obtained at another federal agency, the rating must be the highest obtainable under that agency's appraisal system.</li> </ol>
<i>Award Amount</i>	<p>A QSI is equal to the amount of an equivalent increase or within grade step increase for the employee's grade. Refer to the General Schedule salary table (basic rates without addition of locality pay) for amounts.</p>

<b>Quality Step Increase (QSI) Policies</b>	
<i>Approving Officials</i>	Requires approval by both a Recommending and Approving Official. Approving Officials are determined by applicable delegations of authority.
<i>Timing</i>	QSI recommendations should be prepared as soon as possible but not later than 90 days after the employee's annual rating of record is finalized in order to provide timely recognition of the employee's performance.
<i>Documentation Required</i>	<p>Completion of <i>NIH Award Nomination Form</i>, signed by Recommending and Approving Official.</p> <p>A narrative description of the employee's performance to be recognized including how the employee's actions benefited the government must accompany the award nomination. If a narrative description of the contribution to be recognized was prepared in conjunction with the employee's rating of record, that narrative may be attached.</p>
<i>Receipt of Award</i>	QSIs are processed through the personnel/payroll system (EHRP) and consist of advancing the employee to the next higher step. The QSI is made effective on the first pay period following approval by the Approving Official.
<i>References</i>	<p>! 5 CFR 531</p> <p>! HHS Instruction 531-5, <i>Quality Step Increases</i>, 12/2/86</p> <p>! <i>NIH Employee Recognition and Awards Program</i>, 12/2/96</p> <p>! <i>OD Employee Awards Program</i>, 12/20/96</p> <p>! Memorandum from Acting Deputy Director, NIH to OD Senior Staff, <i>Interim Delegation of Personnel Authorities</i>, 10/23/2001.</p>

<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>QSI Procedures Checklist</b>
	1. Is employee a GS or GM employee on a permanent appointment or on temporary appointment of one year or more? <i>If answer is No, employee is not eligible for QSI.</i>
	<p>2. Is employee below Step 10 of the grade? <i>If employee's salary is equivalent of Step 10 of the grade, the employee is not eligible for a QSI.</i></p> <p>NOTE: If employee is in GM and his/her salary falls between Step 9 and 10, the employee may receive a partial step increase as a QSI. QSIs</p>

Yes/No	QSI Procedures Checklist
	for GM employees are processed as Pay Adjustments. See <a href="#">GM-13,14,15 Pay in Terciles</a> for further information.
	3. Has employee received another QSI in the preceding 52 weeks? <i>If answer is Yes, employee may not receive another QSI until 52 weeks from the last QSI have elapsed.</i>
	4. Is employee's most recent rating of record the highest attainable for the appraisal system under which the employee was covered? <i>If answer is No, employee may not receive a QSI.</i>  NOTE: The highest attainable rating at NIH is Acceptable. If the employee's rating of record was derived from another organization, information about that organization's appraisal system must first be obtained to determine if the rating earned was the highest possible.
	5. Has employee received or been proposed to received another monetary award for the same performance/accomplishment (e.g. Staff Recognition Award, Special Act or Service Award, On-The-Spot Award, Time Off Award)? <i>Employees may only receive one form of monetary recognition for each contribution/accomplishment.</i>
	6. Will granting of a QSI place the employee in the 4th or 7th Step? If so, the employee must wait an additional year for the next within grade increase since advancement to the 4th or 7th Step places the employee in a two and three year waiting period respectively. <i>Consider granting another type of monetary award instead.</i>

	Documentation & Routing - Quality Step Increase
	1. Documentation required: A. Completed <i>NIH Award Nomination Form</i> - all items must be completed. B. Narrative description of performance to be recognized.
	2. Signatures required A. Recommending Official B. Approving Official

	<b>Documentation &amp; Routing - Quality Step Increase</b>
	C. Administrative Officer/Funds Approving Official
	3. Route completed Award Nomination to OHR Human Resources Operations Branch D, Bldg. 31, Rm 4B41 for processing.
	4. OHR, Human Resources and Payroll Solutions Branch processes award through the personnel/payroll system (EHRP) and returns the original copy of the <i>NIH Award Nomination Form</i> to the Human Resources Operations Branch D for filing in the employee's Employee Performance Folder (EPF). A copy will be returned to the Administrative Officer.
	5. Administrative Officers are responsible for maintaining their own internal controls on awards and for advising program officials of the status of the award, effective date, and expected receipt of award.

Prepared by OD Executive Office  
Revised December 2002